

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 1616

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TAGS: PINT, TU, US

SUBJECT: THE IMPLICATIONS OF A NATIONALIST FRONT GOVERNMENT
FOR THE US

1. ONE WAY OUT OF THE PRESENT POLITICAL IMPASSE IN TURKEY
WOULD BE THE FORMATION OF A "NATIONALIST FRONT" COALITION GOVERN-
MENT. SUCH A GOVERNMENT WOULD MOST LIKELY COME ABOUT AS THE
RESULT OF A GROUP SPLITTING OFF FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP)
TO GIVE THE NATIONALIST FRONT A FEW SEATS MORE THAN THE 226
NECESSARY FOR AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE LOWER HOUSE. WHILE
THE CHANCES FOR THE DP TO SPLIT IN THIS WAY ARE HARD TO ESTIMATE
AND HAVE APPEARED TO FLUCTUATE WIDELY IN RECENT WEEKS, THE
FORMATION OF A NATIONALIST FRONT GOVERNMENT CANNOT BE RULED OUT.

2. A COALITION FORMED ON THIS BASIS WOULD BE PULLED IN VARIOUS
DIRECTIONS BY THE MORE EXTREME ELEMENTS WITHIN IN. THE NEED TO
PROPITIATE THESE GROUPS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A TENUOUS MAJORITY
IN PARLIAMENT COULD LEAD THE GOVERNMENT TO MORE RADICAL STEPS
THAN THE LARGE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) BLOC, WHICH IS ESSENTIALLY
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CENTRIST,

WOULD INTEND. THIS TENDENCY WOULD BE PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN REGARD TO CYPRUS.

3. NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY LEADER ERBAKAN HAS LONG PRESSED FOR A MORE UNYIELDING STANCE IN REGARD TO CYPRUS. HIS BELLICOSITY WAS A FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE COALITION BETWEEN HIS PARTY AND ECEVIT'S REPUBLICAN PEOPLES' PARTY (RPP) IN SEPTEMBER 1974. HIS EXTREMISM WOULD BE SECONDED BY THAT OF NATIONAL ACTION PARTY LEADER TURKES (WHO WAS BORN ON CYPRUS) WHO IS BITTERLY OPPOSED TO SURRENDERING ANY TERRITORY NOW HELD BY THE TURKS AND HAS ADVOCATED TAKING CONTROL OF THE ENTIRE ISLAND. THUS THE ADVENT OF A GOVERNMENT DEPENDENT ON TURKES AND ERBAKAN WOULD PROBABLY RESTRICT DENKTASH'S NEGOTIATING FLEXIBILITY AND MIGHT DISCOURAGE THE GREEK SIDE FROM RESUMING NEGOTIATIONS. TENSION ON THE ISLAND WOULD BE LIKELY TO RISE CONSIDERABLY, WITH THE PROSPECT OF TROUBLESOME CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS. THE NEW ATMOSPHERE IN ANKARA COULD ALSO ENCOURAGE THE HARD-LINE TURKISH GENERAL DEMIREL ON CYPRUS TO STRONGER ACTION IN DEALING WITH SUCH INCIDENTS.

4. THE TURKISH-US BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WOULD ALSO BE AFFECTED BY THE ADVENT OF A NATIONALIST FRONT GOVERNMENT. TURKES AND ERBAKAN HAVE LONG BEEN SUSPICIOUS OF AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN TURKEY; THIS WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE JP TO MAINTAIN AS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US AS IT DESIRES. THE PRINCIPAL DANGER TO US INTERESTS, HOWEVER, WOULD COME FROM REMOVING CONSTRAINTS ON THE RPP AGAINST ATTACKING THE US. THIS PARTY'S PRESENT RELATIVE MODERATION HAS BEEN ENGENDERED BY HOPES THAT IT WOULD SOON RETURN TO POWER AND BY RECOGNITION THAT GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US WOULD THEN BE USEFUL. SUSPICION OF THE US RUNS DEEP IN THE RPP, WHICH FOR MANY YEARS BELIEVED THAT WASHINGTON PREFERRED GOVERNMENTS OF THE CENTER-RIGHT IN TURKEY. THE PROSPECT OF ELECTIONS IN 1975 WOULD ALSO ENCOURAGE THE RPP TO DIFFERENTIATE ITSELF FROM THE NATIONALIST FRONT ON FOREIGN AS WELL AS DOMESTIC ISSUES, ONE OF WHICH NO DOUBT WOULD BE TIES WITH THE US.

5. INCREASINGLY RPP HOSTILITY TO THE US WOULD HAVE BROAD REPERCUSSIONS WITHIN TURKISH SOCIETY. THE RPP INFLUENCES MUCH OF THE EDUCATED OPINION IN TURKEY. ECEVIT'S PERSONAL RESTRAINT THUS FAR HAS CONTRIBUTED TO LIMITING PUBLIC ANGER AGAINST THE

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US, EXCEPT IN THE SMALL CIRCLES OF THE EXTREME LEFT. SHOULD HE CHANGE HIS TUNE, A BROAD PUBLIC REACTION AGAINST THE US WOULD BE LIKELY. MOREOVER, THE ADVENT OF A CENTER-RIGHT GOVERNMENT WOULD STIMULATE DOMESTIC TENSIONS AND PUBLIC UNREST OF THE TYPE THAT HAS BEEN EVIDENT HERE RECENTLY. IN THIS ATMOSPHERE, THE ISSUE OF ANTI-AMERICANISM WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY COME TO THE FORE AS AN ISSUE OF DOMESTIC POLITICS. THIS WOULD SEVERELY LIMIT THE FREEDOM OF EVEN A WELL-INTENTIONED

NATIONALIST FRONT GOVERNMENT (AS WAS THE CASE UNDER THE JP
IN THE LATE 1960S) TO MAINTAIN CLOSE TIES WITH THE US.
BERGUS

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